improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality as per the water qulity monitoring undertaken by independent reputed institutions of the country. A total sewage treatment capacity of 1759 mid. (million litres per day) has been created so far for Ganga and its tributaries namely, Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar and Mahananda. As regards Yamuna, the quality of river water has not shown the desired improvement owning to the large gap between the demand and the availability of the sewage treatment capacity particularly in Delhi, and lack of availability of fresh water for ensuring minimum flow in the river. Due to continuous increase in the population of the towns located along the banks of the rivers resulting in increased pollution load, and gap in the availability of financial resources to take up works commensurate with the requirements, there is likely to be persistent divergence between the tackled pollution load and the actual pollution load.

Preliminary meetings have been held for discussing the revamping of the National River Conservation programme with concerned Ministries, independent experts in the field and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). Conservation of rivers is a dynamic activity with the ever increasing pollution load due to increase in population. Review of the strategies of conservation policy and identification of additional towns and rivers under NRCP are continuous process aimed towards ameliorating the water quality in rivers.

Release of forest land

2671. SHRIKANJIBHAIPATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Gujarat has submitted a proposal for release of 427.13 hectare of forest land coming under the submergence and environment clearance from the Government of India; and

(b) if so, the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Government of Gujarat had submitted a proposal for diversion of 427.13 hectare of forest land for Sidumbar Reservoir Irrigation Project in Valsad district of Gujarat for which in-principle (stage-I) approval was accorded by the Central Government on 20.08.2004 with certain mandatory conditions. The Final (stage-II) approval is accorded only after the receipt of the compliance report from the Government of Gujarat, which is still awaited.

Pollution in Yamuna

2672. SHRIMATI JAYABACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an interceptor and diversion scheme has been cleared with a view to cleanse Yamuna of its pollution;

(b) if so, the details in mis regard including details of expenditure, the level of cleanliness likely to be achieved and the amount already spent so far and the results achieved;

(c) the manner in which the current scheme is different from the ones implemented in the past; and

(d) whether there is any similar scheme for rest of the rivers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) According to the information provided by the

Government of NCT of Delhi, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has evolved the concept of laying interceptor sewers along the three major drains namely, Najafgarh, Supplementary and Shahdara in Delhi to prevent the flow of untreated sewage and its treatment before discharge to river Yamuna. The salient features of DJB's proposal include laying of interceptor sewers, augmentation of existing capacity of sewage treatment plants (STPs) and construction of additional sewage treatment plants after full utilization of existing STPs. The proposal takes care of the untreated sewage from unsewered areas and allows only discharge of treated effluent into river Yamuna. The tentative cost of the project is about Rs. 1300 crore. So far no expenditure has been incurred on the project. This concept is similar to the works implemented under Yamuna Action Plan, launched by Government of India in a phased manner.

(d) Under the Centrally sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), pollution abatement works are implemented to improve the water quality in the identified polluted stretches of major rivers in the country. These works incude interception and diversion of raw sewage flowing into the rivers, setting up of Sewage Treatment Plants for treating the diverted sewage, creation of low cost sanitation facilities, setting up of electric/improved wood crematoria and River Front Development among others. Presently, NRCP covers pollution abatement works in 164 towns along polluted stretches of 35 rivers spread over 20 States at an approved cost of Rs. 4863.75 crore.

Effect of climate change on power supply

2673. MS. SUSHILA TIPJYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that climate change has now affected the power supply in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to protect the power disruptions from the climate changes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) So far, no noticeable effects on power generation or supply, attribuatable to climatic change, have been observed. Central Electricity Authority has, however, reported a few grid disturbances owing to unprecedented fog, high humidity, high levels of pollution coupled with absence of winter rains.

(c) Does not arise.

Sale and Purchase of captive elephants

2674. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRA SEKHAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2501 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th September, 2007 and state:

(a) whether a final decision for relaxing the prohibition in the sale & purchase of captive elephants under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, has since been taken;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when necessary amendments to the Act are proposed to be brought before Parliament; and

(c) if reply to part (a) above be in the negative, by when that is likely to be done?